

WORLD REACTION - REPLY TO BULGANIN

Reaction to President Eisenhower's 12 Oct reply to Premier Bulganin's 19 Sep personal letter regarding the disarmament problem has been extremely sparse.

A. As of midnight 19 October, the only Soviet Bloc response has been a single commentary broadcast from Moscow (in English, to North America only), which "welcomed" the President's reply as "reflecting a desire to promote mutual understanding."

1. The commentator, Stepanov, evaded discussion of the US offer to accept the Soviet-proposed "check-point" system as a quid quo for Soviet agreement to the US "blueprint" plan. He said only that the President "expressed agreement" with the Soviet proposal.

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B. A PRAVDA editorial of 16 Oct, calling the US position on disarmament the "main obstacle to agreement", went on to say that the USSR "still expects" replies to "a number of questions" raised by Bulganin.

C. On 13 Oct, the Yugoslav news service broadcast a commentary devoted to the President's reply. Key note: "Eisenhower's reply to Premier Bulganin is based on a realistic approach to the very difficult and complicated disarmament problem. Consequently, the letter can be appraised as a good sign and an encouragement on the eve of the forthcoming meeting of the Foreign Ministers..."

II. Western European reaction has also been meagre. Where any has been noted, it has been the fact of the reply--rather than its substance--that has brought attention.

A. Thus, particularly in Scandinavia, the President's reply has been interpreted as a sign of Eisenhower's returning physical strength after his heart-attack.

B. European supporters of the US position on disarmament have found encouragement in this evidence of returning vigor.

III. There has been no reaction in the Near and Middle East, although an offer by India's Krishna Menon to be "helpful" in connection with the US-USSR standoff on disarmament came after publication of Eisenhower's reply to Bulgaria.

IV. In the Far East, the official Chinese Communist organ, the Peiping "People's Daily" carried the text of the reply on 14 Oct, but refrained from any comment. No other Far Eastern reaction has been reported.